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Truth in Science, in Morals, in Government & in Religion.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE CALLIOPEAN SOCIETY,

Fairfield Academy,

(HERKIMER COUNTY, N. Y.)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1855,

BY HON. GEORGE W. KRETSINGER,

OF ILLINOIS.

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ADDRESS.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Society:

It is with mingled feelings of sorrow and gratification, that I find myself here this evening, again participating in the proceedings of the Calliopean Society. Of sorrow, when I look back over the lapse of near twenty years, and recall to my mind the faces of those who were then like myself active members of this Society, engaged in its debates, and solicitous of every thing that concerned its honor, and its welfare; and then reflect how many of those friends and fellow students, who were near and dear to me, have passed away to the dim land of dreams, from whose returnless travellers no echo even is ever more heard on this side of the grave.

If there is anything in this world of unadulterated friendship, free, and pure, from all that is sordid, and base, it is found in those cases, where it is engendered in the shades of Academic Groves, and along the banks of the Parnassian Stream. It is then, and there, if ever, that the heart, uncankered by the corruptions of the world, seeks out those to whom it is affiliated by the sympathies of its nature, or by the plastic hand of education, and uninfluenced by the miserable suggestions of a narrow and unprincipled selfishness, recognizes and establishes a brotherhood, which neither the mutations of time, or space, or circumstance, can ever afterwards wholly destroy. If its members upon entering the arena of active life, pursue an high and honorable career, and are true to the instincts of a noble ambition, it is a source of the highest pride and gratification; but if, on the contrary, they fall from their high estate, and become the slaves of prejudice, or avarice, or immorality, or of any other unholy passion, it is the cause of the deepest sorrow and regret. If misfortunes overtake them, the warm hand of sympathy is

ever cordially extended, and the words of encouragement and hope are always freely and generously spoken.

It is when the ties of such a brotherhood, having its origin in the noblest impulses of the heart, are sundered by disease and death, that the tenderest emotions of the soul are excited, and we indeed feel that another link in the chain that binds us to earth, has been broken. Then it is, that we can properly appreciate the chaste and beautiful language of the inspired writer, and fully realize that the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is broken; that the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern.

But while the tear of regret is freely shed over the memory of those who have departed, it is matter of congratulation, that so many have been spared, and are yet permitted to do good service, in the great battle field of life.

This society can now claim an existence of near fifty years, and numbers its members by thousands. How well they have profited by the intellectual training which they have in part received here, the annals of law, legislation, the pulpit, and indeed every department of learning and science bear ample testimony. Were it not that the effort might appear invidious, it would afford me the highest pleasure to refer to numbers, whose names now constitute the brightest stars in that galaxy of talent, which, in brilliancy and magnitude, distinguishes our own over every other country. One thing I will say, that if age and numbers are any standard of worth, there is no Association of a similar character, in any section, that can boast of a greater antiquity, or a more numerous roll of members.

And it is indeed gratifying, after some years of combat with the stern realities of life—after having experienced somewhat of its trials, its perplexities, and its vicissitudes, whether in business or professional life, to step aside, and commune, though it be for a brief moment, with the spirits of the Past, under the branches of the same tree that sheltered you at that period, when hope and expectation wreathed the future in their most gorgeous and attractive colours. It is

also matter of instruction at such a time, to compare those hopes and expectations with what has been learned by actual experience, and observe wherein they were delusive and uncertain, and wherein they were important and truthful beacons, burning with a sure and steady light, beckoning, and urging, and stimulating you on to those efforts and exertions which are so necessary to real and permanent success.

It is with feelings similar to these, that your Society, Gentlemen, is regarded by the returned student, who has both encountered the storms and basked in the sunshine of real life. And it is but right, that you should require of him to contribute something of interest to the proceedings of an Association that is claimed, and justly too, to be regarded by him with so much favour. It is in obedience to that request, and to discharge that duty, however poorly, that I, although but one of the humblest of its members, am here this evening.

I know of no subject more in accordance with the objects of your Society, to which to call your attention than that of Truth—Truth in its largest sense—Truth in Morals—in Science—in Government, and in Religion—Truth, both in its nature, and in its application; or as perhaps the scholar might more appropriately term it, Truth in the abstract, and in the concrete.

In the earlier ages of the world, it was supposed to be of an essence so pure, that none but the titled few, who were clothed in canonical robes, or royal vestments, or those who enjoyed their especial favor, were fit to be its disciples and guardians. The doors of its temple were closed against all others. And no offence so rank, could be committed against Religion or the State, as for one of the common herd, as the masses of the people were contemptuously styled, to dare to question the correctness of any established dogma, whether in government, morals, science, or religion.

It is not wonderful, then, that for so many ages, so little real progress, particularly in the science of mind, religion,

and government, was made, and so little accomplished for the amelioration of mankind.

The first trumpet-note that startled the world from its slumbers, was sounded from the hill of Calvary, by the lips of HIM who spake as never man spoke, and with the noise thereof, kingdoms and hierarchies, and empires and thrones, trembled from turret to foundation stone.

The equality of man before God, and his direct and personal accountability, uncontrolled by any agency or power whatever, but his own free will, was then for the first time promulgated. All the wiles of kingly craft, and priestly ingenuity, infuriated to madness in view of the fact, that if such a doctrine was allowed to stand, that 'Othello's occupation' was surely gone, were industriously employed to entrap and circumvent the author of a truth so bold, and audacious as this. But it, and its author stood, and will stand, and survive the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds, for both are eternal, immutable, and unchangeable.

From that period to the present, the truth then and there enunciated, has gone on conquering and to conquer. At times its march has been impeded, and the glory of its victories tarnished by the hypocrisy of the Pharisee, but its onward progress has, at the same time, been sure and steady. It has in all ages encountered, and is still opposed by that lust of power in the human heart, which from the time of the archangel's fall, has never hesitated to array itself against the mandates of Jehovah himself. But of its final, complete, and glorious triumph over the whole earth, no doubt can be entertained. Wherever it has extended, it has been the forerunner of civilization, refinement, and liberty,—for of all these it is itself the essence.

It was not however until the advent of our own Revolution, that it shone out in its meridian splendor, unobscured, and undimmed by a single cloud.

And we have reason to thank God, that it has been our fortune to live in an age and in a country when and where human thought is allowed its widest range and loftiest flight,

and the pen and the tongue are the free, and untrammelled instruments of the human will, acknowledging no fealty, and trembling at the frown of no master, be he Priest, Bishop, or King.

But while there is here no person, or tribunal, vested with authority to declare any opinion contumacious, and therewith proceed to punish its expression with pains and penalties, there *is* a bar at which all theories and conduct are judged, and which in the end seldom errs in its decisions.

That bar is Public Opinion. Justice, it is true, is oftentimes here delayed, until its delay amounts to a positive wrong; but in the end it is certain to be obtained. If an error is committed, a new trial is always granted. But with the stern devotee of truth, it matters but little whether his brow is encircled with the laurel wreath, or the martyr's crown.

With some minds the great danger is, that the exhibition of a moral courage in vindication of what is regarded as true, is *itself* made a *piquant*, and oftentimes leads to ridiculous and deplorable results. And it is to be apprehended, that this ambition for the notoriety that always attaches itself to *heroism* in the defence of what is new and startling, has become to some extent the fault of the times.

It is therefore important, that there should go out from this Society, and from the Institution of Learning with which it is connected, and from all Societies and Institutions of a similar character, an influence which, while it recognizes no base servility and subserviency to any opinion, however apparently erudite and profound, and how long soever it may have been sanctified by time, or upheld by the authority of great names, should also exercise a healthy check upon that other spirit of unbridled innovation, which would uproot and overturn every thing that has not its origin in the lucubrations of its own heated and distempered brain. Because many of the discoverers of new truths have gone down to their graves unhonored and unrewarded, in the anticipation only of a rich harvest of posthumous fame, it is no reason why the originator of every strange idea, and the proposer of

every absurd reform, and the mad, or senseless adventurer, in the pursuit of ridiculous desideratums that are in themselves at variance with all established principles, should command the attention, much less the approbation of the world.

In natural science, how much of time, and what an amount of money and of labor, and of mental effort, have been expended in fruitless attempts to discover and establish the fallacy of perpetual motion! Although the slightest scientific reflection is sufficient to convince us of the utter absurdity of the idea, and that the thing is a natural impossibility, yet there is an opinion prevalent at this day among thousands, that it will yet be discovered. And the only recompense for the years of useless labor, that have been thrown away in the futile endeavor, is, that in the experiments that are constantly being made with that object in view, other and valuable improvements in mechanism, are occasionally, and as it were by accident, brought to light, and reduced to the uses of man.

The same may be said of the philosopher's stone, the quadrature of the circle, and other popular errors, which are contrary to the very axioms of science.

In the moral, political, and social world, strange plans of economy, looking to the complete remoddelling of society, and a total change of all our relations, domestic, political, and religious, are being constantly urged upon the public mind, although in direct contradiction to the whole principles of our nature, and the common sense of mankind.

And it would seem as though Electricity and Steam, had effected such strange changes in the Physical World, so entirely at war with past experience, and all preconceived notions, that mankind had lost their mental and moral balance, and were in a humour to swallow any nostrom that the veriest intellectual Quack might choose to administer to them.

At such a time, is it not well for the student, and the educated man, to pause and carefully ascertain by those rules which the experience of the Scientific World has proved to be unerring; and to the strict observance of which, we are

indebted for all of real progress that has ever been made, the exact latitude and longitude of that ship of truth, in whose safety is centred the best hopes and dearest interests of the human race.

Is it not true, that while we are rejecting with scorn the idea of old Deacon Homespun, that the earth is as flat as a pancake, we are favouring the equally absurd notion of Captain Symnes, who claimed that it was both round and hollow, and that there was a hole at the Poles by which it might be entered, and thoroughly explored. In other words, while discarding many of the errors, and cherishing a contempt for the staid, and sober, and practical views of the Past, are we not running into extravagances in an opposite direction equally erroneous, and altogether more dangerous and destructive? Are we not disposed to relax that jealous caution and careful scrutiny with which we once regarded things new, and strange, and do we not too readily give our assent to Theories the most startling and revolutionary?

While claiming to have abandoned the old *a priori* system of reasoning from cause to effect, which occasioned all the jargon of the schools, and from whose war of words learning, and science, and truth suffered so much, have we not actually adopted a system equally fatal, and received isolated facts as principles, and recognized mere *phenomena* that set at defiance all the rules of consistency as far as their relations to each other were concerned, and outraged all the lessons of the past, as entitled to that veneration and respect which should be accorded only to the harmony and certainty of truth itself.

If this is so, is it not time to inquire where, and whither, are we tending—what will be the result of so much laxity in moral and intellectual investigations—and what, and where is the remedy? Is it not just cause of apprehension, that if we abandon the old, and strict, and cautious policy of the Past, and allow ourselves to follow the jack o'lantern, uncertain, and contradictory medley of mere facts, that are in themselves jarring and discordant, we shall soon find our-

selves in a labyrinth of error, from which we can never be extricated, and which, in individual cases, will end in the horrors of insanity itself, and as far as the masses are concerned, that they will be swayed to and fro by each new wind, however fickle and uncertain, until they sink into the abyss of both anarchy and atheism.

If the record of history did not fully sustain these views and justify these apprehensions, we might suppose the picture to be somewhat overdrawn.

It may be asked, would you then adhere to the errors and abuses of the Past, and vigorously oppose all reforms, and scout at all opinions at variance with its conclusions, for the simple reason that they are new and untried?

By no means. For antiquity in connection with whatever concerns the mental, moral, religious, and political condition of man, in itself considered, there should be no reverence, or respect whatever. The carcass of Conservatism should be thrust aside with the same alacrity and good will, that you would halter the fierce, unmanageable, and untamed colt in these modern days styled progress, and reform. Whatever is old should not be abandoned *because* of its age, while its spirit and strength remain; nor should the neck of whatever may be proposed that is new, be broke in order to save the time and trouble necessary to reduce it to the proper discipline. The one extreme is as dangerous as the other.

It is just and right that whatever is discovered, whether opinions evolved by comparison and reflection, or facts elicited by observation and experiment, however opposed to what has been heretofore regarded as sound and true, should receive a proper and fair consideration.

But the greater its novelty, the stronger its antagonism to the well settled views of the past, the more cautiously should it be received, and the more carefully and jealously should it be subjected to a thorough trial in the crucible of Truth.

There is one element which all new Theories—all assumed discoveries—and all proposed reforms, should contain, and without which they should at once be thrown out and reject-

ed; and that is the element of consistency. They should be consistent with whatever is self-evident, consistent with the principles of our nature, and above all consistent with themselves.

Whatever fails in this element should be regarded and treated by the honest inquirer after truth as mere phenomena, proving nothing, and in no way affecting or unsettling any previous opinion.

It may be again remarked, that all *phenomena* are worthy of attention and observation. It is by the observation of phenomena, and by their collation and comparison, whether in the mental, moral, or physical world, that truth itself is elicited, and Principles discovered and established.

But it is the attaching too much importance to isolated facts, or to a too limited number of them, that are inconsistent with each other, and inconsistent with all previous opinions, and treating them with the respect due only to the convictions of unquestioned and unquestionable truth, that is in the strongest degree objectionable and improper.

There are some departments of investigation, that all minds are not constituted to explore. This remark will apply most particularly to investigations concerning the *phenomena* of mind.

In all ages of the world, phenomena connected with the operations of the mind and soul, and their relations to each other, and to this world, and the next, have been observed, that were truly wonderful and surprising—I had almost said supernatural. In many cases, Intolerance and Superstition, twin sisters begotten by Tyranny and Ignorance, and equally foes to progress and truth, have employed the stake, the sword, the rack, and the scaffold, as the instruments of their vengeance against all in whom any unusual phenomena exhibited themselves.

It was assumed, that there was a power of evil, as well as of good, that was sometimes allowed to play its pranks in this lower world, and that it was the bounden duty of all good christians to hunt down, and destroy it, even though it

involved the destruction of the victims in whose unfortunate persons it happened to have taken up its residence. Everything concerning them was exaggerated and magnified, until the public mind was filled with the wildest chimeras, and vagaries more ridiculous than ever disturbed a sick man's dreams. In addition to the fabulous occurrences of the imagination, every event out of the usual order was ascribed to supernatural causes, and a power and influence over the human race was conceded to creatures that belonged only to the Creator himself. But the tales of the nursery are now almost their only record, and they need only to be mentioned to be ridiculed and despised.

Our lines have been cast in more pleasant places. Sympathy for the victims of delusion has taken the place of any apprehension of injury that may be suffered from any fancied control which they may claim to exercise over others.

The wonders of electricity and magnetism are but just beginning to be discovered. In the physical world they have been already subjected to the most useful purposes, and are contributing, in a large degree, to facilitate the intercourse and enhance the happiness of man.

There is no reason why their relations to mind, as well as matter, should not be fearlessly investigated and fully understood. Whatever is absurd in the pretensions of those engaged in the observation of their phenomena, will be rejected; and whatever is sound and true, will stand and endure. I care not how arrogant their pretensions, even though they go to the extent of establishing connections and agencies at war with the conclusions of the whole world, and destructive to our most cherished views in religion and in morals, let them go on with their investigations,—go on collecting their facts, and trying their experiments, and furnish us with something if they can, worthy to take its rank among the acknowledged Sciences of the world.

But one request should be made—that they will exercise all patience and forbearance, and not set us down as uncharitable or censorious, because we do not choose to surrender

what has been taught us by all the wisdom of the past,—by what we have regarded as the oracles of God,—and by the convictions of common sense, upon the altar of their own new-fangled theories, that are inconsistent in their own facts, and contradictory to everything else. While claiming for ourselves no infallibility, we certainly shall not concede it to others. Holding on to what is good, we are not disposed to surrender it, until we are certain that we are grasping after substances, and not shadows, and that when obtained, they will prove better than that to which we are already attached.

If the mental constitution of any is such that they always become lost in the mazes of their own thoughts, or if their temperament is of that nervous and excitable character that no control can be exercised over their own volitions when engaged in the examination of whatever is new and strange, they are not fitted for the discovery of any truth connected with the science of mind. And whenever any undue excitement is observable, the further prosecution of the subject should be at once abandoned.

There are minds adapted to the discovery and elucidation of mental truths. Let them go on with their observations and experiments, and God speed them in their labours.

We are assured that there is nothing secret but that shall yet be revealed, and nothing hid but that shall yet be brought forth.

It would seem that it was a wise provision of Providence, that whatever is good can be discovered and reached only by the proper degree of effort and labour. And what employments are more noble than those which have for their object the discovery of truth. It is the great mission of man on earth.

But let us be careful and wait until that degree of consistency has been acquired, and that degree of agreement with self-evident truths secured, which is the essential element of all demonstrable truths, before we accord to any number of facts upon any given subject, however apparently conclusive, the full assent of our minds and the approbation of our hearts.

At the same time, let us suffer from no wicked apprehension that there are any truths connected with religion, physics, morals, or the mind, whose discovery can tend in the remotest degree to anything but good. The Almighty does not permit any of his purposes to be athwarted; and it would be an impeachment of his divine character, to suppose that there are any laws, or influences, or relations, which he has created and ordained, the knowledge of whose existence could work any injury to mankind.

But that spirit of indolence and sloth cannot be denounced too strongly, which, unwilling to undergo the mental labour necessary in the application of the tests of wisdom and experience, allows its love of the marvellous to control its love of truth, and satisfied with the slightest observation, yields its assent to propositions the most preposterous and alarming.

That man particularly is to be pitied, who without stopping or waiting for the explanation of phenomena, however strange upon natural principles, steps over the gulf that separates time from eternity, and calls in the aid of Supernatural Agencies. Minds of that character, unsettled in their views, and unable or unwilling to distinguish truth from error, are the ready dupes of every imposture, however flimsy and transparent, and float about the world, the sport of every new whim and fancy that happens to fill the passing hour.

The rules which should govern our moral conduct, or in other words, Truth in Morals, engrossed a large share of the attention of the learned among the Ancients. Seneca, Aristotle, Pliny, and others equally distinguished, the lustre of whose names, and the brilliancy and wisdom of whose views the dust of ages has never in the least degree corroded, devoted their lives to the study of what is true, as far as the moral relations of man are concerned. Different Theories, embodying much of truth and much of error were advanced, and found their disciples and their enemies. And the discussions of moralists, oftentimes bitter and acrimonious, ceased not until the appearance of Him whose coming had been foretold by Priests and by Prophets, and whose actual

presence was announced to the wise men by the Star in the East. A code of morals more mortifying to human pride—more chastening to human ambition, and more denunciatory of the indulgence of all sinful and unholy passions and lusts, than had ever been dreamed of by the most rigid, subtle and refined of the heathen Philosophers, was proclaimed to the world as the standard by which human motives were to be judged, and human conduct squared and regulated.

Not only all unholy actions, but all sinful desires and all impure thoughts, were reproved and rebuked as derogatory to the character of man and displeasing in the sight of his Creator. The entire purity of the heart was required and insisted upon as the reasonable expectation of the Almighty. Before a system so simple, incorrupt and elevated as this, it may well be supposed that all other theories at once vanished; and it was everywhere conceded that if this system was adhered to and fully carried out in life and in practice, that all that there was of good would certainly follow in its train.

At the same time and from the same august source, love to God and good will to Man, was declared to be the foundation doctrine in religion and in morals. And whatever departures have since been made from that standard, have only been so many violations and outrages upon what is certain, true and unerring. It is then on the pages of the inspired volume that you will find inscribed by the pen of the Almighty himself, the only safe rules by which moral conduct is to be estimated and judged. Set down, therefore, as true, that whatever comes up to that standard is right and sound; and whatever falls short of it is to that extent wrong and false. This is and ever has been, since the first promulgation of that standard, the settled judgment of all good and great men. It will bear any scrutiny and pass any ordeal to which it may be subjected. Reject, then, the Teacher as an impostor and the doctrine as false that would inculcate any system of morals different from that. In heart and in conduct strive to live up to its requirements, and in so far as you may succeed,

you will have discharged the sum of human duty and accomplished the sum of human happiness.

Virtue, and the practice of its pure lessons, is there made the great end of human life. The more closely you follow its precepts, the more will you realize that its yoke is indeed easy and its burthen light.

An indulgence in any vice always brings with it its sure and certain reward of punishment and of pain. In proof of this, but ask its votaries, the world over; and if they are honest, they will answer you unanimously in the affirmative. And the power of enjoyment, even during its indulgence, becomes less keen and satisfactory, the oftener it is repeated. While on the other hand, the pleasure and satisfaction experienced in the practice of virtue is augmented, and acquires fresh vigor and intensity with each step of your progress. In every respect is it the direct antipodes of vice. The more the human heart is subjected to its control, the less irksome are its restraints. Walk then in her paths, realizing in your experience and sustained by the assurance of all who have preceded you, that the farther you may progress the more beautiful and pleasing the prospect of the present, and the more delightful the anticipations of the future.

By vice I would be understood as referring to and including not merely depravity, as it exhibits and displays itself in the instances of Intemperance or Licentiousness, whose enormities daily pain the public eye, shock the public ear, and outrage the public conscience, but every passion and propensity that tends to the degradation of our nature, and the assimilation of man to the brute creation.

Among these I would mention Prejudice, Fear, Jealousy, Anger, Avarice, and every other kindred sentiment which, unless bridled and governed by reason and judgment, produce such fearful havoc, not only in the mental and moral being of those by whom they are entertained, but as far as all are concerned by whom they are in any way connected or surrounded.

And herein is a proper subject of study and discipline,

and a proper field for the student engaged in the investigation of truth. Properly controlled, all the sentiments and passions are useful and important at the appropriate times and in the appropriate places; but their names change, accordingly as they are held in subjection or become themselves the masters. When uncontrolled, they reduce man to a condition of the most complete, humiliating and painful servitude. The nature and baleful effects of each might form the subject of as many different dissertations, and I shall therefore merely glance at them in passing. They are all enemies to the progress of truth, and are constantly blocking up its pathway and hedging it in with brambles and with thorns.

Guard yourselves, then, constantly against the insidious and oftentimes almost unconscious influence of *Prejudice*. Without the strictest care and watchfulness, it will warp and control your judgment when you are hardly sensible of its existence. The smallest circumstance—the slightest imaginary affront will oftentimes swerve even the best balanced mind, and thereby enable error to secure another easy victory over truth. It may be a prejudice of opinion or of person, excited and stimulated by jealousy, hatred or conceit. But whatever its origin and however sustained, it should be at once banished from the mind if you desire to accomplish anything in the pursuit of truth, or derive any satisfaction to yourself from the reflection of having been honest and just to yourself and to others.

Fear, in itself considered, is indeed a most craven and contemptible sentiment. But as the opposite of presumption, it oftentimes exercises a healthy check upon the conduct, and in that case it takes the milder name of diffidence; and even this may sometimes run into a fault. But as the opposite of true and genuine courage, which knows its own powers and its own rights, and appreciates and respects those of others, it cannot be too strongly censured and condemned. It has in all ages been the fulcrum upon which Tyrrany has rested its lever, when inflicting wrongs upon the human race. Against its paralyzing power, the mind should ever struggle.

Moral cowardice is more to be deprecated than physical,

because it acquires a more absolute control over its victims. It is silent and secret in its operations, and every act of submission only places its object more completely within its deathly embrace. In an astonishingly short space of time, it entirely destroys the whole individuality of the man, and reduces him to the condition of a mere passive automaton, with no ability or will of his own whatever. A more deplorable situation in which to place the mind, can hardly be conceived. It is unnecessary to remark, that if the vindication of truth depended upon such champions, we might well exclaim, God save the right, for *they* never will.

Cultivate, then, that true courage which shrinks at no trials —is ever eager for investigation upon all subjects in reference to which it is at all in doubt, and when it arrives at conclusions, unhesitatingly avows its convictions and acts accordingly.

The really courageous man, morally or physically, is never vain or boastful of his own strength, and never depreciates the power of his adversary. But he is always ready for any combat and prepared for all occasions; and if overborne in a manly contest, whether it be in a tilt with the sword of steel or of argument, he cheerfully yields the palm, and honorably acknowledges the superior strength or skill of his adversary, and the weakness of either himself or his cause.

In the results of all moral, political or religious contests, where the combatants on either side are struggling after the truth—availing themselves of no undue advantage, but manfully contending for the correctness of their respective positions, the world has an interest in proportion to the magnitude and importance of the questions that are being discussed.

Realizing, then, the importance of these contests, let me urge upon you to engage in them with the right spirit, and having the right object in view. The display of true courage in such a cause, is indeed the heighth of moral and intellectual sublimity.

Of all the passions, none exercise a more corrupting, belittling and debasing effect upon the soul, than *Jealousy*. It is always the accompaniment of little minds, and sometimes acquires an improper influence over those of a larger growth.

But wherever found, and in whatever connection exhibited, it merits and should receive the bitterest scorn and the most withering contempt of all claiming to be men. It has been aptly and appropriately denominated as the Green Eyed Monster. It magnifies every circumstance and discolors every object that comes within the sphere of its vision and observation. Centred in itself, the little centre of a little circle, it cannot understand how it is possible that there are other orbits larger than its own. Its power for evil is indeed surprising. Wherever it is allowed a foothold, the pollution of its touch, more poisonous than the upas of Java, soon debases and corrupts the whole man. It may well be supposed that Truth has no foe more relentless and vindictive. There is no act too mean for it to commit, and no motive too contemptible, by which it is not governed. While it can cherish no honorable, or fair, or friendly feelings towards others, it is at the same time the grave of all self-respect. It has all the cowardice of the midnight assassin, with none of the boldness of the highway robber; while its heart is full of the depravity of both. Self-love, hypocrisy and deceit are its constant and never-failing companions. To those who, by their situation, are brought within the sphere of its control, it is cruel and tyrannical, unless they assent to and submit to all the requirements of its own selfish and gangrened soul. It plays both the Parasite and the Tyrant, according to the situation of the individuals with whom it is brought in contact. When it desires favours, it is cringing and sycophantic; but when favours are expected, it is pompous and overbearing. Yielding to no opinion its true value, unless it happens to be in accordance with its own narrow notions: suspecting every one else of being governed by the same selfish, little, conceited and despisable motives as itself, its unfortunate victim goes through the world, adding comparatively nothing to his stock of knowledge—impervious to every generous sentiment and emotion—insisting upon and regarding all others as the same knaves and fools that he proves himself to be; and finally sinks into the grave, "unwept, unhonored and unsung," and challenging the gratitude of mankind in

nothing else, except that society is finally rid of his loathsome and disgusting presence.

Avoid, then, the first approach of this consuming passion, if you would not embitter your whole life, and shrink your mental and moral nature into the smallest possible proportions. Be generous: be confiding; and above all, be willing to recognize whatever is noble, and just, and true, and beautiful, and excellent, whether in the mental, moral or physical world, although you can claim no part of the glory of its natural or reflected light. Gather the honey of wisdom from every flower, although it may not have happened to have been cultivated in your own garden. Wherever you see exhibited any superior endowment—any of the nobler traits of humanity, yield to it the homage of your respect and praise. Be not too ready to impeach motives, but rather judge everything by its fruits alone. Be charitable towards the errors of mankind, and bind up the broken heart with the words of kindness, rather than tear open the wound afresh with the taunts of that unfeeling selfishness that congratulates itself upon its own fancied felicity, and exults with a fiendish joy over the misfortunes of others.

Pursue this course, and you will realize in your heart a proud satisfaction, a rich glow of generous emotion, and a harvest of self-respect, in connection with which the low and miserable and rancorous exultation of malignancy and jealousy, when their narrow and little desires and hates are gratified, is not worthy to be named; or if named, only to be abhorred and despised.

If you would be regarded as a sincere and honest worshipper at the shrine of truth, be assured that none tainted with this foul passion are ever permitted to enter the portals of her temple.

Another of the passions hostile to the progress of truth is that of *Anger*. It was regarded, and justly too, by the ancients, as a species of temporary insanity. It is a frame of mind utterly and entirely incompatible with that fairness and calmness necessary to the arriving at correct conclusions. Whenever indulged, it exercises a most deleterious effect

upon the mind. Every fresh ebullition tends to weaken the power of self-control, until the slightest difficulty, and the least obstacle destroys that mental equilibrium, without which every thing is liable to appear wrong and distorted. Learn then early to bridle your passions, and what was once an effort will soon acquire the ease of a second nature. It is a no less true than trite saying, that it is the cold steel that cuts, and if you would be successful in any pursuit, allow nothing to disturb you, and be sure and always keep cool. This is above all things important in the pusuit of truth. It is in its nature so pure, and peaceful, and calm, that you need never expect to find it in the muddy and disturbed pools of passion and anger.

There is one other passion so sordid in its nature, so low and groveling in all its impulses and desires, so bitter a foe to every noble and generous truth, and yet so general and so common that it ought never to be passed over in the discussion of a subject like the present—and that is *Avarice.* I do not mean that careful and cautious forethought for the future that has its foundation in all the obligations that a man owes to himself and his family, and which is in itself just and right. I refer to that other passion that accumulates for the sake of accumulation—that shuts up all the sluice-ways of the soul—represses and stifles every generous and humane feeling—is deaf to the voice of poverty and distress, and coldly folds up its mantle when an object of charity meets the eye, and passes on—that guages and judges the mental, moral, and social position of all men by whatever answer may be given to the simple interrogatory, What is he worth? With all under the dominion of this passion, the gloss of wealth, however obtained by any and all means that the law does not positively forbid, hides and conceals every moral deformity, and secures for its possessor that attention and respect due only to intrinsic merit and real virtue.

Against all such adventitious and unworthy standards of character, it is the duty of the student and the devotee of truth, at all times to array himself. Be diligent, and caution all within the sphere of your influence, to beware of its false

and uncertain glare. If this duty is not faithfully and fearlessly discharged by educated men, there is danger that in this utilitarian age, every thing that is truly valuable and excellent in human character will be immolated upon the altar of this modern Moloch.

There is already abroad in the world, a greediness for the distinction of wealth that bids fair to swallow up all notions of honesty, integrity, and fair dealing, and that is disposed to justify any swindle and fraud however wicked and monstrous that secures to its perpretrator the object of his desires.

That indeed is a *noble philosophy* and worthy of all admiration, that teaches mankind that what is acquired in some cases by heirship, in others by lucky and fortunate speculations, in others by unblushing villany, extortion, and fraud, and alas! too seldom as the fruits of honest and patient toil, and which enables its possessor to appear in the tawdriest tinsel of fashion, is worthy of more respect and attention, than what tends to expand, enlarge, and elevate the mind, to purify the morals, and to lay broad and deep the foundations of national and individual happiness and prosperity!

If there were no other reason, the *uncertain* nature of the tenure of wealth—for like Jonah's gourd, what grew in the night, oftentimes vanishes in the day—ought with the reflecting man to strip it of half its value, and convince him of the worse than folly of placing on it any large share of his affections.

No condition is more miserable, and no object is more deplorable, than the man, who for a series of years has dreamed of nothing but the acquisition of property, and who in that pursuit has sacrificed all else, suddenly deprived of its indulgencies, and thrown upon his own unaided resources for maintenance and support. In his retrospect of the past, instead of there being anything from which he can derive consolation, its images are continually mocking at and deriding his misfortunes, and in his anticipations of the future all is gloomy and foreboding. He finds himself with propensities and tastes that he has not the means to gratify—stripped of all that secured him the notice and consideration of the

world—with no resources of mind, upon which to fall back,—for all his inclinations are of an animal instead of a moral or intellectual character—he lingers out a miserable existence, a burthen to himself, and an annoyance to all by whom he is surrounded.

Remember, that in the sole and exclusive pursuit of wealth, every thing depends upon success. Reflect upon its uncertain character, even with the best laid schemes and the wisest calculations. Decide then for yourselves whether you will set your whole heart upon its acquisition: take the chances of success: totally beggar your mental and moral being, and feed and nurture only the lowest propensities; or whether you will be true to the dignity of your nature, and to the object of man's mission on earth: rely upon the higher and purer pleasures and enjoyments to be drawn from the storehouse of a cultivated intellect: make the passions and propensities subordinate to the reason and judgment; and finally make it the prominent idea of your life to nourish and strengthen with a more vigorous growth, that germ of immortality implanted in the heart of man by the Creator himself.

The acquisition of wealth is well enough in itself, and only becomes censureable when it is made the chief and only aim of life, and when all the better feelings and impulses of our nature are sacrificed upon its altar.

Honesty and fair dealing, that frowns upon everything that is knavish and fraudulent, should always be preferred, even before acquisition and accumulation. If either are to be sacrificed, let it by all means be the latter. The approbation of your own conscience, and the respect with which you regard yourself, are worth more than all the pleasures that wealth can afford.

In the densely populated countries of the old world, where the means of subsistence are so stinted—where nearly all the real estate is vested in comparatively a few families—where all the channels and avenues of employment are completely choked up with thousands seeking work from the extreme necessity of keeping body and soul together—where the

amount and forms of taxation are so grievious and illimitable, reaching every article both of luxury and necessity, a *respectable competence* even, cannot be acquired by any one of the laboring masses, without the adoption and practice, in their most rigid forms, of all the suggestions that the meanest spirit of avarice can devise. It is there more the fault of their Institutions than of individuals.

Here, on the contrary, all the avenues of honor and profit are open to all classes—the landed property is more equally distributed, and the most ordinary industry and economy will, in a few years, secure to the able-bodied man who is blessed with health, a home and a farm—labor in all its departments is well rewarded, and the necessity for a submission to the cold and calculating requirements of avarice, in order to ensure success, does not exist. Hence, here, no justification can be pleaded by the man of mere dollars and cents, in extenuation of his course. But he will assuredly, in the end, realize that he himself has been the worst victim of his own avarice. He will find that he has cheated the moral and sentient parts of his being of their best and richest attributes, and nourished and nurtured in their stead a passion that becomes more degraded and miserable upon the very food by which it is fed and sustained.

In view of the pernicious effects produced by this and the kindred passions and sentiments when uncontrolled, some of which we have briefly noticed, the importance and value of that standard of morality can be properly appreciated, which inculcates as its foundation doctrine, that if we would secure the largest amount of happiness—advance with the most rapid progress the cause of truth, and fulfil in the largest degree that glorious destiny which an all-wise Providence has ordained to excite the hopes and stimulate the ambition of man, we must constantly and perseveringly keep the *heart itself* free and pure from the *contamination of vice.*

The duties, relations and obligations of the American citizen, open up a wide field for the investigation and discovery of truth, in all that concerns the Science of Government.

By many, this science is regarded as unworthy the least

study or attention. They are of that class whose selfishness controls every other consideration, and who can appreciate the importance of nothing but what can be estimated with mathematical certainty in dollars and cents, or in pounds, shillings and pence. With them the sum of human happiness is always calculated by the amount of profits that are annually pouring themselves into their coffers, and when these are sufficiently abundant, they sagely conclude that everything is going on about right.

Whatever concerns the honour and glory of the country, and the perpetuity of its Institutions, is set down to the account of *politics*, and contemptuously thrust aside as below the notice of the *business* man. One thing is quite certain; that pigmy intellects and contracted souls of this character, were never intended to be entrusted with the responsibilities of Government. While all is right on 'change, their *serenity* is never in the least degree disturbed. And the only period when their minds revert at all to the subject of Government, is when they are overtaken by the misfortunes which sometimes attend the operations of trade. They then rouse themselves, rub up their eyes, and wonder if it is not really, after all, the Government that is at the bottom of all their difficulties.

It is from this class of political dolts that the unprincipled demagogue derives his main support. Their wonder, and their fears, and their ignorance, are in periods of pecuniary or commercial embarrassment always made the slaves of *his* interest, and are the ready tools that are always used to advance him to positions of trust and power.

When Government is committed to such hands, it is not surprising that they in turn, for the proper consideration, become the instruments of knaves and charlatans, as dishonest and corrupt as themselves, and as the natural result, the enginery of power is used to promote the views and advance the interests of the profligate few, at the expense of the laboring masses of the people.

It is oftentimes the case, that men of pure minds and virtuous hearts, disgusted with the influence that cant and hypocrisy and individual interest at times acquire over the

public mind, and disheartened and discouraged by many a fruitless struggle in the cause of Freedom and Truth, despairing of the Republic, retire from all participation in public affairs, and allow themselves to lose all interest in the decision of public questions, and thus abandon the Country and its Institutions to the issues of whatever fate may befal them.

A course of conduct like this, is anything but the dictate of duty and patriotism, and is always a matter of the sorest regret, when its consequences are fully experienced.

Next to the obligations that we owe to our Creator, are those which, in a Government like our own, we are under to our Country. And the cowardice that would abandon a contest in vindication of what is sound and right, because victory in its first moments does not perch upon their banner, is as much to be rebuked and condemned, as that other spirit of narrow and sordid selfishness, which, acknowledging no obligations, pursues its own little ends, regardless of whatever may befal all else.

Pride of country is one of the noblest and loftiest feelings that can animate the human heart. Where is the bosom that has not thrilled with emotion at the mention of the simple yet commanding exclamation, uttered on a celebrated occasion by a citizen of one of the ancient Republics, "I AM A ROMAN CITIZEN." How much more then of majesty and grandeur, in view of the advanced civilization of the age, and the larger degree of liberty enjoyed by us over every other nation in ancient or modern times, should attach themselves to that other exclamation, "I AM AN AMERICAN CITIZEN," whenever and wherever pronounced.

With a just view of the dignity of our position considered in itself and in its relations to others, is it necessary to urge farther upon the American Student the importance of making himself fully acquainted with the nature and structure of his own Government, and the relations which its different parts bear to each other, and the influence which every public question has upon the interests, happiness, and well being of his country.

We have an extended Confederacy, embracing nearly all

latitudes, interests and classes. We have a Constitution which its Revolutionary framers wisely and patriotically intended should be so constructed as to meet every necessity, to avoid all the evils of consolidation, and at the same time to secure the blessings of good Government. They established the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive checks and balances necessary to its complete, safe, and successful operation, in such a manner as to afford the largest protection to the rights of the citizen, and the amplest opportunity to correct any wrong that might be perpetrated. And the experience of near seventy years has fully justified and vindicated the wisdom of their labors.

Make then that Constitution, and its relations to the different States, and the people at large, an object of the most thorough examination and study.

Banishing from your minds every thing like prejudice, of either a personal or sectional character; properly regarding the relations of the different States and General Government toward each other and themselves; recognizing the doctrine that the the nearer power is brought home to the people the better is it exercised; governed by the experience of the past; conceding to all sections the same rights which you claim for yourselves; acting upon the presumption that the people are honest, intelligent, and virtuous, and will pursue that course which you yourselves would pursue under like circumstances; uninfluenced by the appeals of the mere demagogue, and unterrified by the apprehensions of that conservatism that sees in every reform a revolution, and that clings to old abuses with the tenacity of death, and unaffected by the mere rant of the honest but misguided enthusiast, whose eye is constantly fixed on results, without any regard to the means by which they are to be obtained; approach the examination of every public question, and judge of the character and conduct of every public man.

Be satisfied that whatever is proposed, however true and excellent in itself, *is* at the same time *practical*, and in harmony with the genius and structure of our Government, and the character of our people. All things are imperfect. Be-

cause every thing cannot be effected that might be desired under our system of Government, cherish no sentiment of hostility to that Government itself. You would esteem him a mad man, who should propose, because there were some dark spots upon the sun, that the king of day should be utterly blotted out of existence, and mankind be left to grope in the shades of perpetual night, or run the risk of obtaining a more complete and perfect luminary. There are some evils under every system that must be endured; and that system is unquestionably the best which places all power in the hands of the people, who are the most immediately to be affected by its exercise.

We have long ago scouted the idea that there is any power in the State which can do no wrong. The people may do wrong, but being themselves its first victims, they are quite sure, after some experience, to become convinced of their errors.

In a Government like ours, the triumph of Error over Truth, is of necessity of short duration. Those beautiful lines of the most illustrious of American Poets, which although one of the richest gems of poetry, at the same time contain even more of truth than of poetry, cannot be too often repeated:

> "Truth crushed to earth, will rise again!
> The eternal years of God are hers:
> But Error wounded, writhes with pain,
> And dies among his worshippers."

They should be engraven upon the lintel of every door post, and become with the American people as familiar as household words.

But, Gentlemen, I have already detained you too long, with these disconnected and desultory remarks. But I trust your kindness and forbearance will excuse their prolixity. If by anything that may have been said, you are stimulated in any degree to a more zealous devotion, and more unwearied and persevering efforts in the cause of truth, it will afford me the highest gratification, and I shall feel that our time has not indeed been spent in vain.